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FM AMEMBASSY NDJAMENA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6174
INFO RUCNFUR/DARFUR COLLECTIVE
RUEHYD/AMEMBASSY YAOUNDE 1680
RUEHLC/AMEMBASSY LIBREVILLE 1054

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 NDJAMENA 000171

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E.O. 12958: 04/21/2013

TAGS: PGOV PREL PHUM EAID CD

SUBJECT: CHAD PRIME MINISTER ASKS U.S. HELP IN
POSTPONING DECISION ON FATE OF WORLD BANK ACTIVITIES

CLASSIFIED BY DCM LUCY TAMLYN FOR REASONS 1.4(B) AND
(D)

¶1. (U) This is an action request. See para 8.

¶2. (C) Summary: New Prime Minister Youssouf Saleh Abbas urgently asked for U.S. assistance in requesting the postponement of what he fears may be a World Bank decision to terminate activities in Chad. We agree that the new government should be given a chance to show greater commitment to budget discipline and use of oil revenues for poverty reduction. End Summary.

¶3. (U) Prime Minister Youssouf Saleh Abbas asked to meet with the Ambassador urgently on Sunday afternoon, April 20. DCM (notetaker) attended.

¶4. (C) The Prime Minister explained that he had heard that the World Bank intended to halt its engagement with Chad. He had been asked to travel to Washington, but he was not able to right now. It was impossible for him to leave Chad as he was in the midst of forming a new government. "The past is the past." He was not aware of the details, and he could not be held responsible for actions committed before he assumed office. But he pledged that he would do everything he could to correct the situation. He wanted to go personally to Washington to handle this (as well as meet with other Washington actors). He thought that in a month or so he would be able to do so. That would give him time to get the new government up and running, and also time for him to understand the situation on the ground vis-a-vis the World Bank.

"THIS ISN'T THE WAY TO ENCOURAGE ME"

¶5. (C) Abbas explained that this was the worst signal that could be sent -- just as he was working to form a government which included the opposition. He needed time to do that and to put it to work. It is "the worst present I could get from the World Bank." He asked the Ambassador to convey the request to Washington that the decision not be put in writing and that a decision be postponed until he had a chance to travel to Washington. He had just told the French Ambassador the same message, and believed that Ambassador Foucher would be trying to contact the World Bank Vice President.

¶5. (C) The Ambassador Nigro noted that there might be two interpretations to the World Bank request: one, that it had already decided to break with Chad and just wanted to notify the GOC of the decision; the other, that it was giving the GOC "one last chance"

and wanted Presidential or Prime Ministerial buy-in before going towards a new or renewed MOU.

¶6. (C) The Ambassador stated that he would recommend to the State Department that we support Abbas compromise proposal to the World Bank, given the situation on the ground and the prospect of political progress under his new government.

¶7. (C) Tuning to the domestic political scene, the new Prime Minister explained that he intended to have a new kind of relationship with the opposition, the press, the trade unions and civil society representatives. His new government would be a government "of change," a "government of political opening" that would turn a page in Chad's history." He had met with them and hoped to persuade them that "we can work together without suspicions." He added: "the opposition can now sleep peacefully in their houses - and they know it." Abbas also promised to promote "reconciliation" between the government and the opposition - both democratic as well as armed rebel groups.

ACTION REQUEST AND COMMENT

¶8. (C) We do not know what message the World Bank intended to deliver to Abbas, but we do share the view that the new government should be given an opportunity

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to review the situation. We request that the Department recommend strongly to the World Bank that it permit Chad's new Prime Minister to form his government, review the relationship with the IFIs and travel to Washington after that to discuss the future of those relationships.

¶9. (U) Tripoli minimize considered.
NIGRO